

# Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION 10-15

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FM USMISSION GENEVA  
TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
VOA WASHDC  
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INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
AMCONSUL MUNICH

UNCLAS GENEVA 01611

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FOR P/P RUGGIERO, P/PFO, P/PFE, VOA, EU,  
P/PFL, MUNICH FOR REF, RL

ARGENTINE HR

GENEVA--DEMOCRATIC ARGENTINA WILL SPEAK OUT IN DEFENSE OF  
PEOPLES' RIGHTS EVERYWHERE, THE ARGENTINIAN FOREIGN  
MINISTER, DANTE CAPUTO, TOLD THE UNITED NATIONS  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS HERE FEBRUARY 27.

IN A MAJOR SPEECH TO THE 43-MEMBER COMMISSION, CAPUTO  
PLEGGED THAT HENCEFORTH "THE VOICE OF ARGENTINA WILL BE  
HEARD WITHOUT DISTINCTION ANYWHERE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE  
VIOLATED--WHETHER IT BE IN EAST OR WEST, NORTH OR SOUTH."

ARGENTINA'S POSITION WILL BE "FREE FROM ANY CRITICAL,  
POLITICAL OR IDEOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION," IN CONTRAST TO  
THE YEARS OF MILITARY RULE UP TO THE END OF 1983 WHEN  
ARGENTINA EXPERIENCED A "TERRIBLE WAVE OF REPRESSION,"  
HE SAID.

"FORTUNATELY THAT DARK NIGHT OF ARGENTINA IS NOW BEHIND  
US," CAPUTO SAID. "THE UNYIELDING DEFENSE OF HUMAN  
RIGHTS IS THE REAL WEAPON THAT WE MUST USE TO OPPOSE  
DICTATORSHIP, AUTHORITARIANISM, OPPRESSION AND  
TERRORISM."

CAPUTO PLEDGED HIS COUNTRY'S "FULL SUPPORT" TO THE WORK OF  
THE COMMISSION IN CALLING TO TASK VIOLATORS OF HUMAN  
RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS.

HE ALSO CITED NEW NATIONAL LEGISLATION AIMED AT RESTORING  
PEOPLES' RIGHTS, INCLUDING GRANTING PROPER DEFENSE  
DURING TRIAL; PUNISHING ACTS OF TORTURE AND EQUATING THEM  
WITH HOMICIDE; RIDDING THE COUNTRY OF "ALL FORMS OF  
CENSORSHIP"; AND PROTECTING PEOPLES' ECONOMIC, SOCIAL  
AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS. HE ALSO SAID THAT MANY PEOPLE  
CURRENTLY IN PRISON WOULD BE RELEASED DUE TO THE  
ABROGATION OR LESSENING OF MANY PENALTIES, NOTABLY  
THOSE AIMED AT CURBING IDEOLOGICAL DISSENT, AND THAT THE  
POWERS OF THE MILITARY COURTS WOULD BE REEXAMINED.

CAPUTO RECALLED THAT A NATIONAL COMMISSION HAD BEEN  
ESTABLISHED TO LOOK INTO THE FATE OF THE THOUSANDS OF  
PERSONS WHO DISAPPEARED IN ARGENTINA DURING THE MILITARY  
JUNTAS.

"TO RESPOND TO THE PAINFUL EXPECTATIONS OF THE RELATIVES  
OF MISSING PERSONS, AMONG THEM CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN  
TAKEN AWAY FROM THEIR PARENTS' CUSTODY," THE COMMISSION  
"HAS BEEN PROVIDED WITH THE GREATEST POWERS OF INQUIRY  
INTO THE FATE OF THE DISAPPEARED."

SOON AFTER COMING INTO OFFICE LAST DECEMBER, THE  
GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA REQUESTED THE ASSISTANCE OF THE  
U.N. CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (THE COMMISSION'S PERMANENT  
SECRETARIAT) TO LOOK INTO THE MANY CASES OF MISSING  
PERSONS. ACCORDING TO A U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS SPOKESMAN,  
THE CENTER HAS HANDED OVER TO ARGENTINA MANY OF ITS FILES  
ON DISAPPEARED PERSONS, AND THE NAMES OF 2,508  
CONFIRMED CASES OF PEOPLE "WHO DISAPPEARED IN A POLITICAL  
SENSE" SINCE 1980.

DURING A RECENT STOPOVER IN GENEVA, THE U.S. ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN  
AFFAIRS, ELLIOTT ABRAMS, SAID THAT THE ARRIVAL OF  
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA WAS A "TREMENDOUS  
GAIN" FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.

HE NOTED THAT THE CASE OF ARGENTINA WAS NOT AN ISOLATED  
ONE. "DEMOCRACY HAS BEEN DOING PRETTY WELL OVER THE LAST  
FIVE YEARS IN SOUTH AMERICA," AND THIS HAS BEEN "TOO  
LITTLE NOTICED" BY THE REST OF THE WORLD.  
"EVERYBODY KNOWS ABOUT ARGENTINA," ABRAMS SAID, "BUT  
ARGENTINA WAS PRECEDED BY PERU, COLOMBIA, AND  
ECUADOR, AND IT WILL BE FOLLOWED WITH ANY LUCK BY BRAZIL  
AND URUGUAY."

END WILSON

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

UNCLASSIFIED

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